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INFO RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC 0202
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE
RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE
RHMFIUU/HQ USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 005356

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE, SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EB/FO and EB/TPP/ATT
DEPT FOR SCA FRONT OFFICE (DAS GASTRIGHT) AND SCA/A
DEPT PASS AID/ANE
DEPT PASS USTR FOR HARTWICK, KLEIN, AND GERBER
USDASFAS FOR LTROUBA
USDOC FOR SHAMROCK AND DFONOVICH
TREASURY FOR ABAUKOL
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN

E.O. 12958:N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: ADDITIONAL USDA PRT ADVISORS CRITICAL FOR
AFGHAN RECONSTRUCTION

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1. This is an Action Message. Please see para 7.

2. SUMMARY: USDA PRT Advisors have made a dramatic impact on the agricultural economies of the provinces in which they work. Their effect has been so positive that many PRT Commanders have requested that a USDA Advisor be added to their teams. USAID has generously agreed to provide USD 2.5 million to fund the seven current USDA Advisors for the coming year. More funds are needed to meet the demands of other PRTs for agricultural advisors. With 80% of the workforce on the farm, growing the agricultural economy is the key to winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan people, and providing alternatives to poppy production. We look to Washington agencies, especially USDA, to meet our need for more agricultural advisors for our PRTs. END SUMMARY.

3. Since 2003, USDA has provided a small contingent of seven advisors on an annual basis to provide technical expertise to the Commanders of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in key developmental areas in Afghanistan. They are assigned to PRTs covering Nangarhar, Panjshir, Ghazni, Logar, Helmand, Paktiya, Zabul, Farah, and Parwan provinces. These advisors have made critical contributions to our efforts, applying their respective, home agency skills to underdeveloped areas in need of such expertise as dryland agriculture, irrigation, soil and water conservation, flood mitigation, extension, training, and agricultural systems management, just to name a few. The USDA Advisors specialize in developing and applying projects with funding provided by the military, which in turn provides positive results and direct assistance in relatively short time frames. In an economy in which over 80% of the workforce is directly engaged in the agricultural sector, we cannot overstate the significance of USDA's contribution to the U.S. Mission here.

4. Using primarily the DOD Commanders' Emergency Response Program

(CERP) and US AID's Quick Impact Projects (QIP) funding, USDA PRT advisors have developed and implemented a multitude of short term, but highly effective projects that have positively affected the lives of rural Afghans. USDA assistance in the placement and construction of flood control/irrigation structures in Nangarhar and Panjshir provinces has saved many lives and much valuable farmland.

In Ghazni, Logar, Helmand, Zabul, and Paktiya Provinces, USDA guidance on retention dams and irrigation reservoir locations and construction provided much needed water to the agricultural community and to the public, thus permitting alternate crop selection and growing season extension for increased crop production. USDA Advisors have led the way in applying their technical abilities in deep-well and windmill applications, producing water sources where none existed, thereby winning over the support of local communities and leaders. Irrigation efficiency has increased tremendously in Parwan, Kapisa and Panjshir provinces, due to the recent introduction of soil moisture sensors, through the expertise and training of the USDA Advisor overseeing responsibility of those areas. In Ghazni and Helmand provinces, USDA expertise has improved animal health through artificial insemination and improved rangeland grazing programs. Construction of laboratories for soil analysis and seed storage is presently nearing completion in Nangarhar. On the public health front, Ag Advisors have initiated projects which quickly impact the health of the local communities throughout the country, such as aquifer recharge and canal cleanout, providing safe drinking water to thousands of local residents. In Zabul and Ghazni, slaughter houses are now under construction to provide a safe, sanitary food source for local consumption.

15. The U.S. military has warmly welcomed USDA participation in PRTs and has supported their Ag advisors generously with funding for projects. Generals Eikenberry and Freakley have repeatedly stressed the importance of the contributions of the USDA PRT advisors in the field, and they have highlighted the need for additional USDA Advisors at PRTs throughout Afghanistan. Regional Command PRT meetings consistently recognize the USDA advisors as priority

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partners. Many PRT Commanders have asked that a USDA Advisor be added to their teams, and Post presently maintains a wish list of possible future Advisor locations, should additional funding become available.

16. Funding of the USDA PRT Advisors has always depended on non-USDA sources. USAID has been the primary source for this money, although other agencies have contributed. Just recently, USAID offered \$2.5 million to keep the current number (seven) of USDA advisors in the field. Given the demand for and successes of USDA's experts, we are looking to Washington agencies, including USDA itself, to step forward and provide the funding for additional USDA PRT Advisors in Afghanistan.

17. COMMENT AND ACTION REQUEST: Afghanistan is an agricultural society; 80% of the workforce is on the farm. The battle for the hearts of minds of the Afghan people and the struggle against poppy production begins and ends with a growing agricultural economy. USDA's PRT advisors have made a measurable and mission critical impact in those provinces in which they have worked. But we need more funding and more people to broaden and deepen our impact on the agricultural economy. We ask Washington agencies, and especially USDA, to identify additional funds to send us the agricultural experts we need to meet Mission goals.

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